1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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177 563 171 As early as the sixteenth century a Munda tribal in the Ranchi district established himself as a local Rājā.[3] By virtue of his wealth and power he attracted reputable Brahmans to his court who Sanskritized his rituals and manufactured for him a Rājput genealogy. Eventually this status was accepted by other Rājputs and marriage ties were established.

177 563 There are numerous other examples, and the Santal themselves have undergone considerable Hindu acculturation and some fission and Hindu assimilation though not nearly to the same degree or in such large numbers as the Bhumij. Hindu-tribal contact in the region has been long and intense. All the tribes in the area have been heavily influenced by Hindu culture, some have been partially and others totally absorbed in the Hindu social order and no doubt many Hindu castes have been so recruited in instances where the historical record is unknown. Why the Bhumij have been assimilated and the Santal, Munda, Ho, and some others have not must be understood by reference to particular historical differences which are beyond the scope of this investigation. However, the examination of Santal historical experience does shed light on the general conditions which are relevant to assimilation as well as on the specific historical events which were crucial to the Santal experience.

175 648 669 Perhaps the single most important event in the history of Santal-Hindu relations was the Santal rebellion of 1855–57. This major public event, which first drew the serious attention of India's English rulers to the Santal, reveals at once the nature of Santal-Hindu relations and the strengths and limitations of Santal solidarity. Commemorated in Santal songs and

[3] Roy 1912.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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discussions, it is part of the Santal living cultural heritage and hence of continuing influence.

Various investigations of the rebellion support Man's conclusion that the following four Santal grievances were chiefly responsible for the rebellion: (1) "grasping and rapacious money lenders"; (2) "personal and hereditary debt bondage"; (3) "corruption and extortion by police helping moneylenders"; (4) "impossibility of Santal getting court redress" (Man 1867: from Culshaw and Archer 1945). A fifth contributing factor of an endogenous nature is what Man describes as Santal "improvidence."[4] Leaving aside Man's pejoratives, there is abundant evidence that his understanding of the rebellion was substantially correct. By legal and extra-legal means the Santal were systematically being stripped of their ownership rights over their land and becoming tenants and even slaves of Hindus who knew how to manipulate the law and were accustomed to gaining their ends in the context of the market.

The Santal felt themselves exploited, and not without cause. The emphasis in their culture on "redistribution"[5] and other leveling mechanisms plus their heavy commitment to "pleasure" made the Santal easy prey of the merchant and moneylender. To the British observers and to the Hindus the Santal were "improvident." Ultimately the Santal erupted in a violent revolt during which they mutilated a number of Hindu moneylenders and took vengeance on guilty and innocent alike. One reads of a Hindu money lender whose limbs were severed one

[4] See Datta 1940 for the most complete bibliography of relevant primary documents.

[5] Polanyi 1957.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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175 at a time to signify payment of four annas on the rupee, an
648 annual interest rate of twenty-five per cent.[6]

• 669 The rebellion was not begun on the spur of the moment as a result of sudden passion. The Santal had made many attempts to present their grievances to the government but were rebuffed for various reasons and by various means. Numerous meetings and communications between Santal villages preceded armed
[726] revolt. In spite of the lack of any formal political structure wider than the Pargana, and equipped only with bow and arrow and ax, the Santal were able to overrun all local opposition and even to defeat a crack unit of British-led troops in one skirmish. After intermittent battles lasting over a year the Santal were finally defeated with heavy losses, their rebellious leaders were executed or sent to prison, and the revolt gradually ceased.

[539] Confirmation of official findings and an "inside view" of the rebellion is conveyed by such enduring songs as the following:

> Sido, why are you bathed in blood?
> Kanhu,* why do you cry *hul hul*?†
> For our people we have bathed in blood
> For the merchant thieves have robbed us of our land.[7]
>
> Saheb rule is trouble full;
> Shall we go or shall we stay?
> Eating, drinking, clothing,
> For everything we are troubled.
> Shall we go or shall we stay?[8]

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[6] Culshaw and Archer 1945.
* Sido and Kanhu were the two brothers who led the revolt.
† *Hul* = rebellion.
[7] Archer 1945:207.
[8] Culshaw and Archer 1945:218.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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Though the Santal demands which preceded the rebellion were limited to relieving their economic plight, the preparations for the rebellion and certain events during its course suggest a more radical intent. For example, two brothers, Sido and Kanhu, proclaimed to their fellow Santal that they had supernaturally received a message to worship *Suba Thakur* (Hindi = Head of a District), presumably a deity associated with the political leadership of a District on the analogy of traditional Santal village and Pargana deities; the brothers claimed that *Suba Thakur* had urged them to lead the Santal people in a rebellion. They announced "We will kill and make an end of all the Deko,* rule ourselves, and whoever does not listen, show him a sword."[9] As the author of a settlement report put it, "A deeper or at any rate a supervening cause [for the rebellion] was the Sonthal yearning for independence, a dream of the ancient days when they had no overlords."[10]

At least those who led the rebellion foresaw in victory not only economic relief but increased political power and an opportunity to improve the rank of the Santal. The goal of rank improvement is suggested by a number of ritual practices emulative of Hindu customs which accompanied the rebellion, such as putting on the sacred thread, ritual use of sun-dried rice and oil and vermilion, and purification with cow dung.[11] While wishing to triumph over the oppressive Hindus, the Santal thought of cashing in on the victory with the traditional Hindu symbols of rank. This ambivalence toward the Hindus is a constant characteristic of Santal-Hindu relations.

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* *Deko*, or *Diku*, as it is pronounced in the south, is a term of opprobrium for foreigners, particularly Hindus.

[9] Culshaw and Archer 1945:2.

[10] McPherson from Culshaw and Archer, *ibid.*

[11] Culshaw and Archer 1945.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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The Santal

175 The 1855–57 rebellion had its center in the District of Santal
648 Pargana and extended westward into Bhagalpur and southeast-
669 ward into Birbhum, which at the time were districts of Bengal. Though the rebellion did not directly involve the southern Santal living in the princely states, songs and stories about it did filter south. In 1832 a rebellion had occurred further to the south in the Ranchi District; it probably involved several tribal peoples, especially the Munda.[12] The southern Santal of Seraikela have a tradition of a rebellion having occurred in the latter part of the nineteenth century. They and the rest of the southern Santal, including those of Mayurbhanj, tell a story of two men, sometimes said to be brothers, named Diba and Kisun, whose exploits parallel those of the northern heroes, Sido and Kanhu:

[539] They had such power that within their boundaries no horse could pass; they achieved power from the deities; they were from Matkombeda, a village in Seraikela; they fought against the Rājā; they shot red-hot arrows; they were finally caught; both were of the Soren clan; they were against the government; the government collected many kinds of rent and taxes; Diba said, 'My goats were carried away by a fox, why does the State not give me compensation; my chickens were carried away by a crow, why does the State not give me compensation; the State does nothing so why should the people pay rent and taxes to the State.'

It is said that the children of Diba are still living, and one old man of about sixty claimed that Diba was his sister's father-in-law. Many Parganas are said to have joined the rebellion, but

[12] Thornton 1843.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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175 it is difficult to estimate the territory involved from the information I obtained.
648

669 Though the rebellions of both the northern and southern Santal were unsuccessful, they did draw attention to the plight of the Santal and thus led to enactment of some partially ameliorative judicial and administrative reforms. At the same time, the Santal must have recognized after these defeats that under prevailing conditions, increased political power and improvement in rank were not to be obtained by military might. Evidence to be presented later suggests that this recognition contributed to a decline in solidarity.

173 The dream of ancient days of independence, which, as has
648 been seen, antedated the rebellions, is a kind of dream which is continually nourished by the character of Santal-Hindu social relations. Santal mythology of the nineteenth century and the present is replete with allusions to former days of independence and glory. One favorite myth reported in the nineteenth century and still prevalent describes a mighty kingdom which the Santal once constituted. Each clan had a specialized function, like that of a Hindu caste: the Kisku were kings, the Murmu priests, the Soren warriors, etc.[13] The Santal are thus pictured as independent, powerful, and constituted exactly in the image of an ideal Hindu kingdom. Like all current dreams of the past, this myth expresses current interests. It says that "we were once great as the Hindus presently are." Though serving as a charter for present independence and improved rank, like the emulative symbols of the rebellion, it is Hindu greatness which is sought.

According to mythological history, the Santal were continu-

[13] Bodding 1942:10.

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

539 (migrated) to the seven-river land Campa[23]. There were two passes, one Cae pass and the other the Campa pass.

In Campa they built a great many forts in order to ensure that enemies should not be able to overcome them. One was the Khṣiri fort; this was the fort of the Hɛmbrɔm people; one was the Kɛnḍa fort; this belonged to the Kisku people. One was the Campa fort; this belonged to the Murmus. One was the Badoli fort; this belonged to the Mɛrḍis; and one was the Sim fort; this belonged to the Ṭuḍu people. There were still other forts; but we have forgotten the names.

In Campa we stayed for ages, and there we were a great people. At that time we were not subordinate to anybody. The "kings" (rulers) were persons of the Kisku sept. The Murmus were from olden times our priests; we call them Murmu Ṭhakur. The Sɔrɔns were peons; they were fighters. The Hɛmbrɔms were the nobility, the Mɛrḍis were the wealthy class, and the Ṭuḍus were drumming the dancing- and the kettle-drums, and they were making all kinds of things of iron. The Baske people were buying and selling (merchants). What special work those belonging to the remaining septs had, we do not remember.

Having settled in Campa they placed Marañ buru, the Five-Six and the Jahɛr era[24] in a sacred grove at the end of the village-street and were worshipping them. The Day-spirit they worshipped at sun-rise every fifth year.

Our ancestors of old have, people say, told, that in olden times, when Ram raja was living, at that time all Kharwar people went with him to Loṅka (Ceylon) and helped him to vanquish Rabona raja; for this reason from then on for a very long time we had no fighting or anything of this kind with the Dekos[25]. They were living in the plains and we in the forests and on the hills. But afterwards we got very much fighting with the Dekos; until this day we have no happy relations with them. As soon as we have cleared the jungle in any country, the Dekos come and rob us of it. Still if the Sahibs[26] nowadays did not help them, we should soon drive them to the other side of the Ganges. At the time of the insurrection[27] we had intended to make the Ganges our boundary; but

[823] [114] [778] [829] [671] [175] [669]

[23] It is not possible with any certainty to identify the countries mentioned. Skrefsrud thought that the expression "the country of the seven rivers" might be identified with the present Punjab. Others will identify Cae Campa with the country to the north-west of the present Chota Nagpur. As regards the last mentioned, the same name might have reference to two different countries. [24] lit. The Lady of the Sacred Grove. Every Santal village is to have a sacred grove (jahɛr) in its vicinity, where possible, a part of the original forest, consisting of sal-trees and at least one Mahua tree. More further on. [25] Deko is the name used by the Santals for a non-Santal of the better class, especially Hindus. A Mohammedan will not be so called, if he is recognized as a Mohammedan. [26] i.e., the European courts. The Santal's ideas of justice are not regulated by written laws. [27] The Santal insurrection of 1855, was not aimed against the Government of the day, but was a misguided attempt to get rid of the money-lenders. The Government naturally had to intervene. This insurrection marks the beginning of a new era for the Santals, according to their own estimation in many ways a beginning of deterioration. The mention of the insurrection here is an anticipation.

B Mukherjea O, Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1950) 1962
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The sister sings: — 539 648 173

Dadarè Indan Siñ Mandan Siñ,
Dadarè chuṭalòñ Campa ka gaṛ.
Bàhinge na kando, na khijò,
Bàhinge hate ka sàṅka bicòñ ;
Bàhinge kane ka sona bicòñ,
Bahinge tao hona lèbò Campa ka gaṛ.

The above is roughly rendered as following:—
O brothers, Indan Siñ and Mandan Siñ.
O brothers, we lost Campa gaṛ.

The brothers said in reply :—
O do not cry, do not cry, O our sister dear.
Campa gaṛ shall we conquer back,
By selling your bracelets and ornaments of ear.

The Santal sojourn at Campa is also noted for a serious civil war between the Kisku and the Màrṇḍi clans. There is also a song describing the fight: — 539 669 614 173

Beret', beret', beret'mè sè, gateñ ho,
Cirgàl, cirgàl, cirgàlmè sè, gateñ ho,
Kòeṇḍako mapak' gòpòc' kan.

Beret', beret', beret'mè sè gateñ ho,
Cirgàl, cirgàl, cirgàlmè sè, gateñ ho,
Badoliko nèṇpèṇt' gòpòc' kan.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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Cete làgit' mapak' kana, gateñ ho,
Cete làgit' gòpòc' kana, geteñ ho,
Cete làgit' nènpènt' gòpòc' kan ?

Simà làgit' mapak' kana, gateñ ho,
Ḍàṇḍi làgit gòpòc' kana gateñ ho,
Ḍàṇḍi làgit' nènpènt' gòpòc' kan.

The above folk-song may thus be rendered to bring out its sense:—

First stanza:—

Get up, get up, O my friend;
Watch, watch, O my friend.
Look here, the *Kòeṇḍas*[1] are killing.

Second stanza:—

Get up, get up, O my friend;
Watch, watch, O my friend.
Look here, the *Badolis*[2] are killing.

Third stanza:—

The friend in reply asks:—

What are they fighting for, O my friend.
What are they killing for?
What are they destroying each other for?

1. Kòeṇḍas—Kiskus.
2. Badolis—Maṛṇḍis.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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Fourth stanza:—

For land are they fighting,
For boundary are they fighting,
For homestead are they fighting.

Here an explanation is forthcoming as to who the Kharwars were. We have already seen that some Kharwars are said to have accompanied Ram Chandra, in his fight against Ravana of Lanka (Ceylon). Now the Santal traditions say that upto the period the people were at Campa, the Santals, Birhors, the Mundâs and Kurmbis (Kurmis)[1] were called Kharwars. The Birhors were outcast because they ate the flesh of monkeys, considered as their taboo.[2] At Campa, the Mundâs were gradually separated and the Kurmbis gradually adopted Hindu customs.

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We hear that some Kharwars entered into matrimonial alliances with a section of the Hindus known as Siôs. Gradually their descendants became known as Siôs. They founded kingdoms. Some Birhors also became Siôs.

It is narrated that in ancient times one of the Siôs lived as man and wife with a daughter of a

1. A Santal can now even marry a Kurmbi girl. They are now found more in Hazaribagh, Manbhum and Purulia. [582]

2. The Santals of Mayurbhanj said that they never ate monkeys. [262]

retired to the Rajmahal Hills. In 1851 Captain Sherwill found 83,265 Santals in Daminikoh alone.

Santal Rebellion (Hul) of 1855. Mr. Buchanan Hamilton has mentioned in his unpublished manuscipt that "the Santals has settled in the Dumka sub-division by 1809 having come last from Birbhum in consequence of the annoyance which they have received from its Zamindars". In 1818 Mr. Sutherland found them engaged in clearing the jungles under the hills in Godda sub-division. Mr. Dunbar, Collector of Bhagalpur, mentioned that by 1836 about 427 villages had been established by the Santals in the Damin area.

These Santals of the Daminikoh in the year 1855 became rebellious. The chief cause of this rebellion was the oppression of the Mahajans, the Darogas and the corruption of the Amlas. These Mahajans gave the Santals money as a loan with high interest and one he had contracted a debt he had little chance of escape, because if his creditor sued him, the Santals could not produce any authentic record, whereas the creditor had his ledgers and day book. These Mahajans sometimes without going to court to realise his capital and interest, sent his agents to take away their cattle forcibly. The Santals bore this oppression thinking that it was useless for them to obtain redress against the wealthy Mahajans, besides that had not enough money to pay the Amlas and Pleaders in the Court. If they approached the Court and loged a complaint against these Mahajaus, they only got an order on the police to enquire and report, but the police generally sided with the Mahajans and submitted reports in their favour. [1 Erratum: i.e., "once". 2 Erratum: i.e., "Mahajans". -- Analyst]

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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SANTAL PARGANAS

175 The Santals of the Damin complained that they
648 got different treatment than their neighbours the Suria ^1
669 Paharias and the Mal Paharias, and that the Santals who
426 were living outside the Damin areas, were better off. Inside Damin the Zamindars ousted their Santal tenants from the lands they had cleared, although these lands had been settled with them by the Zamindars on long leases at low rates, on condition that they would clear the jungles. But as cultivation extended, the non-Santals forced the Santals to till some of their lands and thus they gradually extended their holdings, and ultimately appropriated the best portion of the lands in the village by exacting mortgages in return of loans. Thus the Santals moved to other parts where they settled by clearing fresh jungles and establishing new villages. Again they were forced to leave the
[692] villages. When the Santals lodged complaints against the Mahajans in the court, no steps were taken by the executive (naibs, darogas etc.) as they were ready instruments in the hands of the Mahajans. The Santals who took loans from the Mahajan, could not pay in cash but worked out their debt by personal services, thus they became slaves in the hands of the creditor. The sons and daughters or his other nearest relations were also liable for this sort of service.

175 Due to all these oppressions the Santals were very
648 much annoyed, and as a result of this in 1854 they
669 attacked the houses of some Mahajans at night. The authorities caught them and treated them as dacoits. They were tried and convicted although they protested against it. After a year, again the same thing was repeated but this time the Government released them as it appeared that the crime was due to the oppression

1 [Erratum: this should read "Sauria". Cf. errata ^ sheet, category 116, p. x -- Analyst]

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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of the Mahajans. Then in the month of July 1855 a revolt broke out among the Santals, under the leadership of four brothers, Sidu, Khanu, Chandu and Bhairal[1] of the village of Bhagnadihi situated South of Burhait.

Sidu and Khanu proclaimed themselves lords of the place under the title of Subahs and appointed other subordinate officers. Having in this way raised a general expectation of some great event among their countrymen the leaders hoped that the Government would enquire into the matter and redress their wrongs. When that was not done they demanded that the Government should redress their wrongs, failing which they would be compelled to take the law into their own hands to put an end to the persecution. Getting no response from the Government, a general order went through the encampment to move down towards Calcutta. Accordingly on the 30th June 1855 at full moon, several thousand Santals set out. As long as the food which they had brought from their villages lasted, the march was orderly but with the end of their own stock of provisions, the necessity for plundering arose. On the seventh of July of the same year, having heard of the gathering with two brothers at their head, a police officer accompanied with some sepoys went hurriedly to arrest them. After some discussion the police officer ordered his men to arrest them. Hearing the order of the Inspector the Santals were so enraged that they jumped upon him and bound him. Sidu their leader killed the Inspector with his own hand and the police left nine of their party dead in the Santal camp. This tactless procedure of the Inspector changed the whole trend of the Santal unrest and it took the form of rebellion, for at first they did not seem to have contemplated

1 [Erratum: this should read "Bhairab". Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. ix -- Analyst]

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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armed opposition to the Government. Their main object was to march down to Calcutta in order to place the petition of their grievances before the Governor-General. In July 1857 real rebellion started and several villages were burnt and looted. They attacked the house of Raja of Ambar at Kadamsair, near Pakur, and destroyed the Indigo factory and some railway works there. The Santal mob killed many English men including two English ladies.

The local authorities first took it as robbery, but at the end of July 1857 the Government finding it difficult to control the mob asked for more military help. Detachment after detachment poured in, native landlords supplied help to the troops on their march, and a special commissioner was appointed with extraordinary powers for the suppression of the rebellion.

All the troops were placed under the command of a Brigadier General but he had not got full and independent authority. An order was issued to him on the thirtieth of July stating that the military should not act independently of the civil power, but that the military operations should be entirely in the hands of the military commanders. The troops contacted the rebels at Mahespur and defeated them and their leaders, the four brothers, were wounded and several hundred Santals were killed. On the 24th July the troops took possession of Burhait, and Sidu the rebel ringleader was handed over to the troops by his own followers. Due to this military action quiet had been restored to some parts, but still there were a large number of Santals up in arms who took refuge in the jungle. After this an order was issued by the Government that those who would come in and submit within a week

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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would be pardoned with the exception of the leaders and those who had committed murder. The Santals took this offer as a confession of weakness and in the month of September again renewed their activity. By the end of the month of September the area from Deoghar to the South Western border of the district came in the hands of the Santals. The Santals showed great bravery and reckless courage in the struggle against the military. As long as their national drums continued to beat, the whole party would stand and allow themselves to be shot down.

The Santals showed great bravery in this struggle and they did not understand yielding. Once forty Santals refused to surrender and took shelter inside a mud house. The troops surrounded the mud house and fired at them but the Santals answered with their arrows. Then the sepoys made a big hole through the wall, and the Captain ordered them to surrender but they again shot a volley of arrows through the half opened door. The sepoys started firing through the hole and the Captain again asked them to surrender but they continued shooting arrows. Some of the Sepoys were wounded. At last when the discharge of arrows from the door slackened, the Captain went inside the room with a Sepoy. He found only one old man greviously wounded, standing erect among the dead bodies. The Sepoy who accompanied the Captain asked him to throw away the arms but instead he rushed upon him and killed him with his battle axe. The Government was then compelled to proclaim Martial Law. As soon as the order for martial law went forth, the things assumed a very different appearance. The Santal rebels had to surrender and peace prevailed.

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The Governor understanding the mistake of his predecessors tried to appease the Santal by removing the genuine grievances. He made the Santal territory a separate district called Daminikoh, with four sub-districts, Dumka, Godda, Pakur and Rajmahal. The charge of these sub-districts were given to a Deputy Commissioner and four assistant Commissioners. The regular police was abolished and the duty of keeping peace and order and of arresting of criminals was vested in the hands of the parganait and the village headman.

In the social sphere also steps were taken to ameliorate the condition of the oppressed Santals. The money lenders were not permitted to extort their debts over and over again by recourse to trickery or otherwise. False weights and measures were corrected and cheating in this department was punished and the Santals could now sell their produce in the market witout fear of being swindled. The abolition of serfdom and the new relationship between capital and labour were far reaching reforms, and the Santal could earn his living as a free worker on the Railway instead of being a slave of a powerful protector. Again, the beginning of tea plantations about this time gave a fresh impetus to profitable work and a higher economic level was achieved by the Santal, who further decided to migrate to the tea area, and on the expiry of the contract to return with a tidy some of money. Such a diverting of labour caused an easing in the struggle for existence among those who stayed at home and enabled the migrant to earn enough to establish himself securely for life.

Thus out of the rebellion came some lasting good and the Santals in the end benefited from it.

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Sorup and Haru Mąñjhi were two brothers. Sorup Mąñjhi left Bogri because of the elephants, came to Raipur and settled. He had established himself well at the end of a year or two, so he told his younger brother: 'Leave Bogri, where the elephants are on the increase. Some day you will be trampled on and killed. Come with me.' Haru Mąñjhi thought to himself: 'True enough, many men have been killed; perchance they will kill me.' Thinking thus, he took all his children, left Bogri and came to Raipur. From Rautora in Raipur they established a village in Barikul, Sorup Mąñjhi saying to his brother: 'Go to, brother, put up your huts and stay at Barikul.' Then Haru Mąñjhi went out with his children, his cattle and his goats, and built his huts there. He had four boys and two girls; the girls they brought with them from Bogri, and the four boys were born in Barikul. He obtained sons-in-law for his daughters to live with them, and one or two tenants came together. In this way the village increased to many houses." Wild elephants, of which there are not so many now as formerly, do still on occasion cause great damage to ripening crops. Barikul was founded five generations ago, a period of about one hundred years. At that time there was also a possibility that by moving his abode the Santal could regain a measure of independence. The Santals have been spoken of as formerly "nomadic".[1] It may be that in the strict sense of the word they were in some remote period nomads. For any period of which we have record, however, they have been agriculturalists, though food-gathering and hunting provide them with important subsidiary occupations. Their migrations have been due to pressure of one kind and another. They prefer to move to forest lands where they will have a hard struggle to establish new settlements than to remain where they have to defend their holdings and their livelihood against hostile forces, whether these be wild animals, malignant actions directed against individuals or the community from the unseen world, or the oppression of landlords and moneylenders.

The last cause operated to produce a great northward movement in the early decades of the nineteenth century, and finally goaded them into rebellion. The Santal rebellion has been frequently described.[2] It took place in an area remote from the Bankura district, but it has to be mentioned because it created

[1] P. O. Bodding, *Bengal District Gazetteers: Santal Parganas*, ed. L. S. S. O'Malley, Calcutta, 1910.

[2] J. H. Hutton, *Modern India and the West*, ed. L. S. S. O'Malley, Oxford, 1941. Chapter on the Primitive Tribes, pp. 417-44. Also bibliography.

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a great stir throughout the Santal country. The story has become part and parcel of the consciousness of Santals everywhere, and the leaders are still celebrated in songs that are current far from the places in which they performed their exploits. The rebellion had no direct connection with the Sepoy mutiny. Both risings did, however, originate in the unsettled state of the country and the inexperience of the British authorities. The Santals rose against the intolerable rapacity of the moneylenders, with whom the subordinate officials of the government, and particularly the police, were in league. It became necessary to call out strong armed forces to restore law and order before the grievances could be redressed. The rebellion followed a pattern one might expect when ill-armed rioters faced armed and disciplined troops. The Santals gathered, sometimes numbered in thousands, and proceeded to plunder the nearby bazaar towns. In the first flush of indignation and excitement they sought out their enemies, murdering police officials and moneylenders, as also other hapless individuals who came in their way. The alarmed government dispatched strong military forces to the area and proclaimed martial law. The disturbances dragged on in sporadic fashion for over two years, at the end of which the constructive measures of the government began to take effect. A new district was set up with special regard to the need for protecting the land of the Santals, and their village system was used in the organization set up for maintaining order by giving a measure of responsibility to their tribal officials.

Since that date the history of the Santals has been peaceful and some measure of progress has been achieved. It was not however, until the second decade of the twentieth century that the Bengal Government passed an Act—the Bengal Tenancy Amendment Act, 1918—which endeavoured to protect Santals and other aboriginals in Bengal in similar fashion. It prohibited the transfer of land from aboriginals without the permission of the courts and prevented the attachment of their lands for debts arising out of causes other than the non-payment of rent. By that time most of the damage had been done, and consequently the Santals are now overwhelmingly in the position of under-tenants. The background of their economic life can be seen in the following example, which is typical rather than peculiar. In 1896 the villagers of Ramboni borrowed the sum of forty rupees from their landlord in order to excavate an irrigation tank on their land. In the year 1913 they were sold